

Human Rights Council – 27th session
Ending violence against children: a global call to make the invisible visible

Panel discussion

23 September 2014, Geneva

Statement by Ireland

Mr President,

Ireland thanks the distinguished panellists for their presentations.

The 2013 Global Survey released by the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on Violence against Children acknowledged that some progress has been made in preventing and addressing violence against children. However, this progress has been too slow, too uneven and too fragmented to bring this violence to an end. Many children who are exposed to violence live in isolation, loneliness, and fear, often in close proximity to the perpetrator, who in many instances is the person they depend upon for their protection and well-being.

It is incumbent on all States to ensure that children are protected and not subjected to violence or abuse. Even with the best legislation, even with radically improved systems we must never think of child protection as something that is dealt with only by mandated persons or by experts. Each and every one of us has a responsibility to safeguard children.

Ireland has undertaken a number of recent national initiatives to strengthen children's rights, including the establishment of a dedicated Ministry on Children and Youth Affairs to advance children's rights; the establishment of a Child and Family Agency to consolidate and enhance service provision to children and families; and the introduction of the Children First Bill, which is a key piece of legislation is intended to raise awareness of child abuse and neglect, to provide for mandatory reporting by key professionals, and to improve child protection arrangements in organisations providing services to children.

As part of our overall commitment to promote and protect the rights of the child, Ireland will shortly sign and ratify the Third Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. As stated in its preamble, the Protocol will reinforce and complement national mechanisms allowing children to submit complaints for all violations of their rights.